

# Stephanie Limage: Breaking the Norms of Filmmaking

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WIFTV member, Stephanie Limage is redefining traditional filmmaking as we know it.

Steph is a filmmaker, musician, social entrepreneur, and Canadian delegate for the G20 Young Entrepreneur Association with the confidence and vision to impact change around the world through her art. She once relocated her entire life to Haiti for 5 years for a project. She has trained and educated film units in foreign countries to be ready to shoot at any given moment of crisis. She has mentored underprivileged people to use the power of film and documentation to change their own lives and get them out of poverty. Steph fully invests her time, attention, and energy to her art and to the people she works with. Her films are more than just entertainment, they are social impact projects that address and change social problems around the world.



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I met Steph for the first time at a coffee shop in Vancouver. She wore a black brimmed hat and a black top. But she beamed light and energy and rarely broke eye contact as she led me through story after story of her adventurous career.

Steph founded her production company, Limage Media Group, in 2008 in Vancouver BC. She is originally from Manitoba and currently resides in British Columbia, but her travels do not stop there. Limage Media Group has successfully set up a variety of media literacy programs in Canada, Haiti and Argentina to help assist marginalized and underrepresented individuals.

Steph's first taste of humanitarian aid was through making art with the residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). During the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, Steph received a small grant. With the money, she bought canvases and paints and invited passersby to make art with her. Steph saw the moment as an opportunity to help others. She explains, "Why not create an event that benefits all parties and gets the artist outside of narcissism to make them think outside of self and inside the community. Treat a social problem through art." Through her work in the DTES, Steph created the foundation and template by which she would move through every subsequent project of hers. "What I found is that when you have a community in unity, you have progressive social change that is enacted," explains Steph.

At 26 years old, Steph uprooted her life and moved to Haiti for a project, which ultimately became her film *Voices of Haiti*. There, she helped communities get access to clean and potable water, helped musicians and artists produce work, and covered the presidential elections at the time. During the 8-year long project, she took time to teach people how to use the camera equipment and how to tell their story through the medium of film. "I wanted to put the power and control of the narrative into their hands," Steph says. By reproducing herself in the people who surround her, Steph allows the story to be told by the communities it directly affects.

Through their training, Steph hired these filmmakers to work as content creators for her company. In this way, Limage Media Group can activate these teams abroad in the event of a humanitarian crisis or social unrest, rather than Steph flying a crew down. The rest of the year, these employees are kept busy with other projects so they can remain on the payroll, allowing them to build a life and a career for themselves. "I am essentially an investor," Steph explains, "like microfinance in a different capacity. There's nothing out there like it, and they know that."

These groups of trained individuals became the content creators for Steph's new channel, *Ghetto News International*. *Ghetto News* has been a dream of Steph's for several years. Through the channel, Steph gives the power of media and storytelling to those at the margins of society. She believes in investing in human capital and having trained workers who can work on different projects in various locations.

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— Terri and Steph in Buenos Aires

In 2018, Steph set up her most recent division of *Ghetto News* in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Terri, a young Argentinean woman, covers women's issues and the women's rights movement in Latin America, with a focus on inner city Buenos Aires. Terri is a single mom and is passionate about social justice. With Steph's mentorship, Terri will create and produce monthly episodes for *Ghetto News*, while showing viewers how they can better support the women's movement in Latin America.

Through *Ghetto News*, Terri's life has changed. "She is able to have a predictable pay check, to see her family, provide food security for her child, and pay into a retirement plan," explains Steph. "That's huge."

With Haiti and Argentina already underway, Steph looks to broaden her horizons for *Ghetto News*. Ultimately, she will have 1,000 employees stationed all around the world, just like Terri in Buenos Aires or Patrice in Port au Prince. In this way, *Ghetto News* can remain real, raw, and authentic, just like the people who are covering it.

As a filmmaker, Steph has always let her heart lead her through the story. She urges young filmmakers to prioritize doing the same. "Don't worry about the money; worry about the narrative, worry about the story, and just go for it," Steph encourages.

Written by Zoe Arthur. *Zoe Arthur is a filmmaker living in Vancouver, BC. Her films tell stories of social justice and expose the need for change for communities at the margins of society.*

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